



# Bedford Cemetery Views

A Public-Private Partnership

The mission of the Friends of Town of Bedford Cemeteries is to support the restoration and maintenance of the four cemeteries

December 2012

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We could not ask for a smoother transition of the role of Chairperson from John Wood to Dave Danielson and Julie Schappals, the new Co-Chairs. John has graciously agreed to continue on our board in an emeritus position, so between the three of us, the other board members and our supportive membership, we're looking forward to an exciting and productive year. After the success of the Civil War program, the Indian Wars presentation and the cemetery tour, we think we're well positioned to increase awareness of the fascinating art and history in our local cemeteries. But, we can't do it alone and as we enter the time of year for reflection, we're grateful we have members such as you that we can count on for support.

## Did You Know?

The first gravestones in New Hampshire (and most of New England) were made of sandstone which deteriorated rapidly. Slate became popular in the early 1700's because it was easily carved, durable and readily available as cast-off ballast from ships coming from England, which also made it affordable. Graves in colonial cemeteries usually face to the east, to face the dawn on Judgment Day.

Membership renewals are enclosed, we would appreciate your quick response.

Thank you and  
Have a Happy Holiday Season!

Mutter.  
Ella  
Frau des  
Hermann Engelhardt  
Geborene Rittner  
Gestorben S 17ten Juni  
1887 im Alter von  
26 Y. 7 M 11D

Ella Hermine  
Gest Sept. 3, 1879

Karl Randolph  
Juni 9, 1887

This German inscription is from the gravestone of first-generation American Ella Rittner Englehardt and her two infant children. The Rittners, Herman and Caroline, came from Germany to Manchester in 1859. Herman worked in one of the large cotton mills, while Caroline raised their daughter Ella and son Otto. After daughter Ella married Herman Engelhardt, the couple lived with the Rittners on 118 Third Street in Manchester. Their five-month-old daughter died there in 1879.

Eventually the Engelhardt's made their home in Bedford, where Ella died of septicemia and pneumonia after the birth of her son Karl, who lived only one day. Her parents, her brother, and her husband all mourned her loss. Engelhardt moved away. Herman Rittner died at Manchester's Odd Fellows Home 28 June 1894, age 62, probably from a stroke. His widow, Caroline, daughter of Gottlieb Hoffman, survived her husband twenty years and died in Manchester on 6 January 1914. Otto Rittner remained in Manchester and raised a small family there.

Repaired gravestone from the Back  
River Road Cemetery



The gravestone was repaired in 2012 with funds raised by the Friends of the Town of Bedford Cemeteries.

# Bedford Spotlight

compiled by Melinde Lutz Byrne

## Griggs Holbrook 1835-1864

The grandsons of Deacon John Holbrook were busy farming on Holbrook Hill when the Civil War broke out. Silas, Albert, James, Joseph, Ralph, Griggs, and Horace grew up close and no doubt competitive. Who should go to war and who should stay – these were the burning questions of the day.

Their grandfather, Deacon John, a Revolutionary soldier, brought his four sons to Bedford from Roxbury, Massachusetts, in 1803. He gave each son a farm on Bedford's highest land. Now in their retirement years, those sons looked to their own sons to support them.

Silas Holbrook, a teacher and youngest of Thomas Holbrook's three sons, was the first to enlist for the Union, 26 Sept 1861, and march off with Company M, 1st NH artillery. Silas' brother, 24-year-old Albert, was not far behind. This left eldest son James, losing his war with consumption, to help their father.

Brothers Joseph and Horace couldn't leave their dairy and lumber businesses. They stayed. Griggs and Ralph Jr., also stayed to keep their father's farm going. Not even the sizable bounties paid by Bedford to men who enlisted for nine months were enough to tempt them away.

As the war raged on, Griggs was captured by the love of his life. On 21 August 1862 at her father's "mansion house," Griggs Holbrook of Bedford married Mary Jane Shirley of Suspension Bridge, New York. He remained in Niagara, N.Y. and kept in close touch with the family in Bedford.

Silas and Albert fought their way through Manassas, Fredericksburg, Bull Run, and Antietam. News travelled slowly and Silas may well have arrived home in December 1862 before news of his severe wounds from an exploding shell at Fredericksburg reached the local papers. Perhaps the injury to his hand, shoulder, and thigh made it impossible for him to teach again. Silas convalesced and waited with the others to hear from Albert.

Albert fought at Chancellorsville in May, 1863. And then there was Gettysburg, where the 1st NH fired nearly four hundred artillery rounds and didn't lose a single man.

This last battle stirred the North to action. Griggs enlisted in

July 1863 from Niagara, New York, as part of Capt. Swan's ill-fated Company K, NY 76th Infantry. He paused only long enough to promise with all his heart to return. And so it was that Griggs and Albert both fought at the Battle of the Wilderness. Griggs was captured there 5 May 1864 and taken to the infamous Andersonville prison camp in Georgia.

By late August 1864 Albert was in the trenches around Petersburg, where, on the first of September, while preparing dinner, he was shot and killed by a sharpshooter. Within two weeks the family knew of their loss. It took four months for word to reach home of Griggs' death from fever and diarrhea at Andersonville Prison, 22 August 1864. A teen-aged fellow prisoner, Lawrence Walker, was exchanged in mid-December and made his way to Niagara with the tragic story. Griggs died one year and one day after his marriage.

Griggs Holbrook rests in Southern soil at Andersonville National Cemetery. Stones for both Griggs and Albert stand among the Holbrook graves at Joppa Hill.



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